

Dear Mr
Mandela

UMKONTO
WE
SIZWE

NO EASY WALK TO FREEDOM, Articles, Speeches, and Trial addresses of Nelson Mandela (Foreword by Ahmed Bin Bella ; Introduction by Oliver Tambo, Edited by Ruth First) Basic Books, Inc., N.Y. 1965

This compilation of articles, which begins in 1953 about the 1952 defiance campaign, continues through the 50s & has, in the 2nd article, "the shifting sands of illusions", the Mandela break with the Liberal Party.

By June 23, 1955, the Congress of the People was born in which they were trying to unite "all the races of South Africa", & "peasant and miner, housewife and domestic worker, trade unionist and taxi driver & student, laborer and clerk" says Ruth First, as editor. Mandela's speech is on "People are Destroyed". The next article, Feb. 1956, is on land hunger. Mandela speaks about the ANC declaring a boycott on Bantu education. The 50s will end with his article in May 1959 against "Vervoerd's Tribalism". The whole section against apartheid is titled "Our Tactics and Theirs" and the emphasis is on the many tactics "our struggle needs".

No doubt in the last two years of the 1950s (1958-9) is when the African freedom movement in the rest of Africa became of the essence as Ghana got its independence and the picture here is of Mandela at the African heads of states meeting in 1961. The treason trials begin in 1956 (20 days before Christmas) and last four years. The ANC during that period organized the anti-pass campaign; in a word, 1960 which was Africa year in West Africa and East became anti-pass year in South Africa.

On p. 63 of this book Mandela is answering the charge of treason. They collaborate with those Communists of the ANC but are not Communists. The sentence on p. 64 on the one-party system is not overly enlightening. "My Lord, it is not a question of form, it is a question of democracy. If democracy would be best expressed by a one-party system I would examine the proposition very carefully. But if democracy could best be expressed by a multi-party system, then I would examine that carefully. In this country, for example, we have a multi-party system at present but so far as the non-Europeans are concerned this is the most vicious despotism you could think of."

The next section is on "Resistance from Underground". It is during that treason trial, lasting no less than 4 years that Mandela came to everyone's notice, not only by his great actions (incidentally, he is a lawyer) but the fact that there was basis for new growth. "New" meaning that though the ANC had ended its legal days, despite the fact that they were found not guilty & the PAC then called for an All-in African Congress in Pietermaritzburg for March 1961. Mandela was there elected as leader of the National Action Council and his talk is entitled "The struggle for a National Convention".

The next and crucial is the General Strike called by this All-in African National Action Council (1961). It's called for "stay-at-home on 27, 30 and 31 May 61". It received massive support with even the official press estimating that it is up to 15%. Mandela says "The African people demand freedom and self-rule. A political organization that is forced by opportunism and petty political rivalries into signing itself with the energies of an oppressed community is doomed". p. 101. He ended the speech of June 1961 "We are the people of this country. We produce the wealth of the gold mines, of the farms, and of industry. Non-collaboration is the weapon we must use to bring down the Government. We have decided to use it fully and without reservation."

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120) "Then on the night of 16 Dec. last year the whole of South Africa vibrated under the heavy blows of UMKONTO WE SIZWE (The Spear of the Nation)."

The final section brings us back to court again, first "Black Man in a White Court", which was the trial Oct. 22, 1962. And the final one "The Rivonia Trial" June 11, 1963, which saw Mandela sentenced to life. As the founder of UMKONTO WE SIZWE, he explains there were two reasons for founding it:

1) The continued violence of the government makes violence of the African people "inevitable", but he denies terrorism

2) "We felt that without violence, there would be no way open to the African people to succeed in their struggles against the principle of white supremacy."

He then traces development from 1912 when the ANC was formed to 49 when it adhered strictly to constitutional struggles. 2) he refers to Chief Mbuli as "my leader" and quotes from his speech at the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952, stressing that the ANC had remained determined to avoid violence even when the South Africa Act was further threatened by the Native Land Act. 3) when in 1960 the South African government declared itself a "Republic" the African population was not allowed to vote at all. Mandela shows that before 60 there had been violence both against the women in 1957 when they were ordered to carry passes; in 58 "with the enforcement of cattle culling in Sekhukhuni land; and in 1959 when the people of Cato Manor protested against pass raids; and in 60 when the government attempted to impose Bantu Authorities in Pondoland; and finally the 61 riots. Mandela keeps using the expression "properly controlled violence" because it was "subject to the political guidance of the ANC."

The Manifesto of UMKONTO was evidently issued in Dec. 1961. He refers back to March 21, 1960 (when) 69 unarmed Africans died at Sharpeville." (The Algerians were evidently those who helped the most and Ben Bella, who introduces this work, was the closest to Mandela.

Mandela in this speech speaks about "the relationship ^{between} the ANC ^{and} the CP and UMKONTO and that party." p. 178.

The upshot is that whereas he is not a CPer, and he will continue to collaborate with anyone who helps African freedom, it is quite ~~simple~~ simplistic, both of Marxism and the CP. That would be explainable in apartheid South Africa and yet why not a single word of criticism of the CP? (Incidentally he states that he joined the ANC in 1944 as a young man) He is obviously imprisoned in the godforsaken Robben Island, the maximum security penal island S.A. uses.

By the way, the pictures are quite beautiful, and we may want to use some, both of Mandela and another one of Winnie Mandela, but there are no pictures of the mass movement.

Mandela / 1/2 joined ANC 44
imprisoned on Robben Is

Violence
will reform
any
Peace Prize
1960
White
1958
1959
1960
Mandela
CP
W. Slay
Mandela
Robben Is